

Alden House

# Alden group builds future

## Frame put up for visitor center

By Chris Brucker  
The Patriot Ledger

### Duxbury

**DUXBURY** — Work has begun on what will be a visitor center at the historic John Alden House — the homestead of John and Priscilla Alden, prominent members of the Plymouth Bay Colony.

Volunteers and contractors Saturday held an old-fashioned "barn-raising," during which the wooden frame was erected.

"By the end of the week, we hope to have an enclosed, weatherproof structure," Bob Edmunds, director of the Alden Kindred Organization and Museum, said yesterday.

Edmunds, who is a direct descendant of John Alden, said that when completed the visitor center will contain a meeting room, a classroom, demonstration area, storage space and bathrooms. The structure will be accessible to disabled people.

"It's been a long wait," Edmunds said. "We needed this barn desperately, and it's a feeling of relief and satisfaction."

Edmunds said about 28 volunteers helped with the barn-raising. About 100 spectators were on hand to see the building take shape.

The new, two-story building is being constructed on the site of an old barn that collapsed a few years ago.

The building will allow the Alden Kindred of America to operate year-round.

Edmunds said that the Alden House, built in 1653, has no heat, which placed limits on how many programs the group could run.

"Now we can think in terms of running full seminars on everything from web sites to the history of the Alden House," Edmunds said. "This is going to be a breakthrough in a sense that it will expand our activities in many areas and make us more visible to the community."

The timber-frame walls and its posts and beams, fashioned by Benson Woodworking Co. of Alstead, N.H., are connected with wooden joinery, the same way buildings were built when the country was first settled.

Tedd Benson, president and founder of Benson Woodworking Co., said the project serves as a



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Clara Clapp of Duxbury, left, a descendant of the Alden family, and her friend Bea Richards watch the barn-raising Saturday at the John Alden House in Duxbury.

reminder of how Americans can work together to build something special.

"When we lose that feeling, we lose the soul of this country," he said.

The barn site is on part of the 100 acres along the Bluefish River that Mayflower cooper John Alden won in a Plymouth Colony land-grant lottery in 1627.

The colonial house is believed to include the framework of the cottage that John and Priscilla (Mullins) Alden built in 1632 when they moved to what is now Duxbury from Plymouth.

The home is where the Aldens raised their 10 children.

John Alden lived the last 30 years of his life in the house. He died in 1687. He was the last of the original Mayflower passengers to die.

One interesting tool at the Alden

House is the genealogy program, a computer database listing the descendants of John and Priscilla Alden, about 45,000 names.

Edmunds said that the Alden Kindred organization has received grants from the UPS foundation, and the Wight Foundation and Heritage Fund in Duxbury.

Edmunds said the barn will cost approximately \$250,000 to finish. "Right now, we are about two-thirds of the way there in collecting the funds needed to complete the project," he said.

The house and barn are at 105 Alden St., about a quarter-mile east of Route 3A.

For more information about the Alden House, call Bob Edmunds at (781) 982-0692.

Donations may be made to the Alden Museum, P.O. Box 2754, Duxbury 02331.